

VINDICATOR

The journal of classic science fiction & fantasy boardgames from yesterday — and today

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VINDICATOR,

Vol. II, No. 2

June-July, 1998

Published bi-monthly

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Subscription rates: 6 issues, \$11 (\$15 foreign); 12 issues, \$20 (\$26); sample issue, \$2 (\$3.50). Payment in U.S. funds.

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ANOTHER ISSUE ALREADY?

Notes and anecdotes from the publisher

I'm not sure it made me any stronger, but at least it didn't kill me. My first issue as editor and publisher of VINDICATOR was many things — including time-consuming, frustrating, and, at times, mystifying. Above all, however, I found it to be a very rewarding experience. That feeling — not to mention the fact that my mailbox is spitting subscription checks out at me — has led me to believe that I just might be able to make something out of this project.

At any rate, if you're reading this — and I'm going to take an issue off of your subscription if you're not — then that must mean that the second issue of the revived VINDICATOR has found its way from my Mac to your mailbox. I feel confident that, with an adequate flow of submissions, this newsletter can get better and better with each issue.

With that being said, here's some observations on this issue and the last:

- I've already learned my first valuable publishing lesson: Be as vague as possible when writing a "coming next issue" box. As I write this (in early May), it doesn't look like all four of the articles I mentioned in the "Next issue" box on page 3 of the April, 1998 issue are going to make it. For one thing, I wrote three of them, and I don't want VINDICATOR to become strictly a forum for my thoughts and ideas. While some people might find such a project fascinating — say, for instance, myself — most

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► MICROARMOR

SERIOUS SF MICROARMOR

An Introduction to Dirtsides II

By Michael Friend

Vindicator editor emeritus

It is probably safe to assume that most gamers, including both boardgamers and miniaturists, are aware of the popularity of **Battletech** and **Warhammer/Warhammer 40K**. The tremendous publicity and support that these systems have received from their publishers helps to keep them in the spotlight within the hobby (just like **D&D** in an earlier period) out of all proportion to their actual quality. In fact it's this incessant advertising and periodic release of new material and figures that has allowed them to virtually eclipse lesser-known but considerably better systems. There's at least a couple other miniatures systems, **Warzone** and **Kryomek**, that are attempting to fight for recognition by using the same techniques as **BT** and **WH**, but they turn me off with their over-the-top space fantasy future history. I was looking for something a little more realistic and meatier than the cartoonish characters and outlandish situations presented in these games, something that would allow me to create serious squad-level and microarmor games similar to **WW II** and modern tactical games. Despairing of ever finding a decent commercial set of rules, I attempted to write my own rather convoluted rules for SF microarmor several years ago, but never finished. My prayers were finally answered a little over a year ago when a fellow gamer introduced me to two rules sets which shall from now on direct the majority of my SF miniatures gaming.

Ground Zero Games of Britain has only published four gaming products, but their excellent

quality has far outweighed their lack of quantity. In the early '90s they published the first edition of **Full Thrust**, a rules set for spaceship combat which has become very popular (they keep showing up at conventions) and required the publication of a second, improved, edition as well as a supplement called **More Thrust**. This was followed in 1993 by the release of **Dirtsides II**, a set of SF microarmor rules completely redesigned from an earlier edition. Their latest opus, released in 1996, was **Stargrunt II**, still another redesign from an earlier game and concentrating on squad-level infantry skirmish combat. I've had the opportunity to play all three games (and referee scenarios for the last two) with my local gaming group and I can attest to the fact that they are all fun to play and extremely innovative systems (especially the last two), with easy-to-learn, smooth-running game mechanics. The advertising copy on the back cover of the **Dirtsides** book states that this is "the future of science fiction wargaming." After playing the game several times, I have come to the conclusion that this statement is true, rather than just advertising hype. But because these games haven't received the publicity blitz that **Warhammer** and **Battletech** have, they are almost virtually unknown in this country. I believe that **DSII** and **SGII** are infinitely superior to all other SF gaming systems available today.

Officially, it's generic

Rather than force players to work within an official, rigid "future history" like other games, **DSII** was designed as a generic system. Yes, the

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► MICROARMOR

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designers wrote a historical chronology and situation for use with their own campaigns using the system, but you are under no obligation to adhere to that background in your own gaming. Hence, the system allows referees to create their own story line and design vehicles to fit it.

The majority of vehicles are classified in five main sizes: class 1 (scout vehicles, jeeps), class 2 (light tanks, small APCs), class 3 (main battle tanks, MICVs, medium self-propelled artillery), class 4 (heavy tanks, large artillery) and class 5 (superheavy tanks and most combat walkers). Yet two even larger classes are available if someone wants to field an Ogre-type or other modular land dreadnought. Class size is multiplied by 5 to determine the capacity of the vehicle; this capacity is filled by installing a variety of anti-armor and anti-infantry weapons systems. Direct fire weapons include rapid-fire autocannons, high velocity cannons, hyper-kinetic penetrators, mass driver cannons, high energy lasers and fusion guns. Both guided and salvo launched missiles are also available. All these weapons are offered in a variety of sizes from 1 (smallest) to 5 (largest) and can be installed in turrets or fixed mounts. In addition, each weapon type has differing damage capabilities determined by their firing range and weapon size (the larger the weapon, the greater damage it can inflict and the longer range it has). One of three generic types of power plants can be installed, and then the mobility type for the vehicle (wheeled, tracked, hover or anti-gravity) is determined. Armor is installed next and cannot be any higher in value than the size class of the vehicle itself. (For example, a size 3 tank has value 3 armor on its front surface and value 2 armor on its sides, top and rear.) Ablative or reactive armor can be installed to protect against laser or missile fire. All this is topped off by the addition of a fire control system (for guns) or missile guidance system (for missiles), ECM and point or area defense system (for use against incoming missiles). These

If Dirtside II isn't at your gaming store ...

Dirtside II is available for \$20 from GZG North American representative, Geo-Hex. Aside from being famous for their Gamescape and Battlescape terrain systems, Geo-Hex also sells all three GZG games and a wide variety of spaceships, vehicles and figures to use with those games, as well as model buildings, trees and flocking material for making grass and foliage.

The SF 1:300 scale microarmor was created by CM Designs of Britain and is sold by Geo-Hex under the Future Wars and Capricorn Space trademark.

Contact Geo-Hex at 2126 North Lewis, Portland, OR, 97227. Phone: (503) 288-4805; fax: (503) 288-8992; e-mail: geo-hex@aol.com; Internet:

www.geo-hex.com

systems are rated in either basic, enhanced or superior quality. Different types of infantry can also be "built" as well as specialized vehicles such as infantry and cargo transports, self-propelled and towed artillery, aircraft and aerospace craft, combat walkers (a generic term for mechs and mecha) and oversize vehicles. There are definite limits on vehicle design so that a player can't go overboard and create unreasonable machines, but there's still plenty of leeway allowed for a large variety of configurations. Probably the easiest way to build vehicles is to take a model from your personal collection and design the specs to mimic your model as closely as possible. When you become familiar with the system, it would probably take you less time to construct a vehicle than it would take to read this paragraph.

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► COMMENTARY

'WHERE'S MY DAMN VINDIE?'

By Duke Ritenhouse
Vindicator editor and publisher

Unfortunately, I wouldn't blame you if you've been saying that to yourself after a few days of returning from the mailbox without your favorite independently published gaming 'zine.

But there is an explanation for the tardiness of this issue, which I had originally planned on mailing out on or near June 1. In fact, the explanation is taking the place of this issue's scheduled commentary: "Why **One World** is the Best Boardgame of All Time."

Here's the deal: I just completed a 2,300-mile move from Michigan to Southern California to start my new job (where I'm also receiving computer training that's pushing my workdays into the 11-hour range). I had hoped to have this issue completed and mailed by June 3 — when I got in my car and began an epic journey across prairie, mountains and desert — but I lost that race against time. And, as much as I love these old games, I just had to put VINDICATOR on the back burner while I did some of the necessary things to get settled here.

The delay in this issue has also forced me to rethink my

The Vindie top ten

1. G.E.V.	Metagaming/SJG
2. Ogre	Metagaming/SJG
3. Creature That Ate Sheboygan	SPI
4. Wizard	Metagaming
5. Melee	Metagaming
6. Car Wars	Steve Jackson Games
7. Starfire	Task Force Games
8. Ice War	Metagaming
9. Demonlord	Dwarfstar/Heritage
10. WarpWar	Metagaming

Note: Thirty-three other titles received at least one vote.

publication dates. This is the June-July issue of the revived VINDICATOR (the previous issue should have been more correctly labeled "April-May" rather than just "April"), which you're hopefully receiving before July 1. With that in mind, I'm going to set Sept. 1 as my target date to mail the August-September issue. In other words, VINDIE will still be published six times per year — there's just been a delay between the first and second issues.

Finally, please note my new mailing address if you're planning on submitting any hard copy. My e-mail address, however, remains the same.

• The results are in from last issue's classic SF/fantasy boardgames poll. Thanks to everyone who submitted a top ten list.

As you can see from the accompanying chart, 43 games received at least one vote. To me, that's more telling than the fact that the **Ogre/G.E.V.** system was the runaway winner. It shows that there's *at least* 43 classic games out there that are still being played and enjoyed — in some cases, up to 20 years after their publication dates.

I was, however, disappointed to be the only person to vote for the vastly underrated **One World**.



► MICROARMOR

Continued from page 3

Unlike other games, there is no fixed "Igo-Hugo" sequence of play. Instead, the vehicles and infantry are organized into platoons of from three to five elements each, and turns are composed of players alternately activating individual platoons in any order they wish until all platoons have been activated for that turn. As a platoon activates its elements may perform different actions (while remaining within integrity distance), such as move, move and fire, fire, rally, attempt system repairs, act as forward observer for artillery fire or close assault. The non-phasing player may even attempt opportunity fire on the phasing player's moving elements. The main idea is to keep all players active during a game (especially in team games), constantly watching the shifting battle and deciding which platoon to activate next so as to implement a strategy or gain an advantage. Banished is the traditional boring period as you wait for your opponent to finish his turn so that you can finally move. Here, there's no letup of tension and decision-making is constant.

Dice of all descriptions

Yet another innovation of the game is the use of almost the full range of polyhedral dice available for gaming. Five different dice are used (d4, d6, d8, d10 and d12). Most die rolls in the game

are called "opposed rolls" and require the attacker's roll to *exceed* the defender's roll to achieve success. If the attacker is able to roll a "larger" die than his opponent, then he has a better chance of rolling a higher number — but even d10s and d12s have low numbers. All modifiers in the game either raise or lower the die type used rather than adding or subtracting numbers to the roll itself. This tremendously simplifies the various rolling procedures and virtually eliminates the long modifier lists that other games are notorious for.

Each platoon is issued two chits or markers that stay with it throughout the game. One is a Command marker (which indicates the unit quality by color and leadership rating by number); the other is the Confidence Level marker. A unit is classified in one of three ways: Green units (green color) are new and inexperienced troops, regulars (blue) are line troops with battle experience and veterans (orange) are experienced battle-hardened troops. Each of these levels are represented by a die type — green (d6), regular (d8) and veteran (d10). The platoon leaders are rated from 1 to 3, with 1 being the best. There are five confidence levels; confident (CO), steady (ST), shaken (SH), broken (BR) and routed (RO). As leaders are killed, new ones take their place — some-

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Before you submit, read this

Let's get down to brass tacks: **In no case should two spaces be used following a period.** Despite what your English teachers might have told you, the industry standard at every newspaper and magazine in the Western Hemisphere is to use one space. It's a supreme hassle to do a search-and-replace routine on every document that comes across my desk with the dreaded 10th grade two-space look.

There's a good reason for all this. In the pre-computer era, using two spaces following a period (not to mention other tricks such as double-spacing every line or leaving huge margins to all sides of a page) allowed editors more room to notate their instructions to typesetters or composers. Which is all well and good. But since the vast majority of professional writers, freelancers and stringers in the Western Hemisphere can obtain access to some form of computer today, such tricks are no longer necessary. Most editors I know haven't touched actual hard copy since about 1982.

So, please, I'm begging you. I want your submissions, but not if they're going to make my head explode. Just hit the space key once.

► MICROARMOR

Continued from previous page

times with worse ratings than before — while confidence levels may drop due to failed morale tests.

While other games have a separate morale phase usually, near the end of the sequence of play, **DSII** requires players to check their platoons' morale during their activation. This is done through two separate tests, the Confidence and Reaction test. A Confidence test is made immediately when a platoon suffers an adverse combat result. The player must roll the unit's quality die against its leadership rating plus the threat level of the circumstance causing the roll. If it fails its roll then it immediately drops one or two confidence levels (depending on how badly it failed). Dropping confidence too far could drastically inhibit the unit's ability to function effectively — or it might even run off the table. Reaction tests are made when the player wants the unit to attempt an action under adverse conditions. The roll is made the same way as for a Confidence test, but if the roll fails it simply means that the unit refuses to act, while its confidence remains the same. This simple mechanism keeps the units from acting like unfeeling supermen ready to perform the impossible under all conditions and gives them a feeling of being more than just simple little metal automatons.

Blowing things up

The meat of the game is in the combat procedures, and here is where it really shines. All vehicles in a platoon must predesignate their targets before resolving fire and, once designated, they fire individually. First, a to-hit roll is made; the dice used can be different for every separate fire attempt. The firer determines his die type according to the firing vehicle's fire control system and the range band (close, medium and

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Where to get the metal

Editor's note: This information was extracted from the body of Michael's article. For space purposes, it is presented here in a bare-bones format (Michael's article went into great detail concerning the miniatures lines each company below has to offer). **VINDICATOR** readers interested in **SF micrar - mor** are encouraged to contact these companies directly to obtain catalogues or other information.

Simtac

15G Colton Rd., East Lyme, CT, 06333
(860) 739-3609

Irregular Miniatures

North American representative:
Silver Eagle Wargame Supplies
4417 West 24th Place,
Lawrence, KS, 66047.
(785) 838-4480
eaglewars@aol.com

Stone Mountain Miniatures

P.O. Box 675, Brighton, CO, 80601
(303) 654-7989
Fax (303) 659-9024
StonMtnMin@aol.com

Gladiator Miniatures

North American representative:
Regal Miniatures
1116 Broadway, Polk City, IA, 50226.
(515) 984-6470
Fax (515) 984-6682.

► MICROARMOR

Continued from previous page

long) to the target for that particular weapon. For example, an enhanced fire control system firing into the weapon's medium range band would use a d8 while a basic fire control firing at long distance would use a d4. Meanwhile, the target's owner rolls one or possibly two dice. The primary die is determined by the size class of the vehicle. A size 1 vehicle rolls a d12, size 2 rolls a d10, size 3 rolls a d8, size 4 rolls a d6 and size 5 and higher rolls a d4 (the higher the die, the better). The target size die can also be raised if the player built that vehicle with stealth capability. If the target was turret down, hull down, evading or in soft cover it could also roll a secondary die. After the correct dice are determined the roll is made and the firer's die roll must *exceed* the target's die (or dice) to hit.

Damage for successful hits is determined by pulling damage chits from a cup rather than consulting a traditional CRT. Included with the rules are two sheets of marker chits — 119 of those are damage chits. Numbered chits in three colors (red, yellow and green) make up the majority of the chits and represent damage points (0, 1, 2 and 3), while the others represent catastrophic hits (Boom!), mobility hits, and weapon system hits. All these chits are dumped into a cup or can and the appropriate number are pulled when a hit is achieved. The number of chits pulled is determined by the size of the weapon. Thus a size 2 weapon will pull 2 chits while a size 4 weapon will pull 4 chits. But even then damage isn't automatic because each weapon has certain limits as to the type of colored chits that are valid for the various range bands. The firer pulls the appropriate number of chits and checks their validity for the firing weapon. If any are valid numbered chits, they are added together and compared to the armor value of the target. If the chit total equals the target's armor value, then it is "damaged", cutting its speed in half and reducing its weapon capability. A chit total that exceeds the armor val-

... the infantry are not to be ignored — unlike other armor games, they can pack a very respectable wallop in this game

ue destroys the target. Mobility hits immobilize the target, though still allowing it to fire, while system hits knock out the target's weapon or the firer's weapon. Of course, a Boom chit totally destroys the target.

Salvo launched and guided missiles cause damage in the same manner, but have additional effects. Salvo missiles may also hit nearby vehicles (moral — don't crowd your vehicles together), while guided missiles must pass through a cordon of area defense systems, point defense systems and ECM systems to successfully reach their targets. Each of these systems can be built with either basic (d6), enhanced (d8) or superior (d10) capability and the firer must roll his missile guidance die (also designated as basic, enhanced or superior) and successively beat the dice of all these defense and ECM systems to finally hit the target. I realize all this sounds complicated, but in practice it moves very quickly.

The guys on foot

So far I've explained direct and missile fire from vehicles, but the infantry are not to be ignored — unlike other armor games, they can pack a very respectable wallop in this game. Resolving infantry firefights is simpler than resolving vehicle fire and it is still CRT-less. There are three basic types of infantry: militia, line (regular professional), and powered (battlesuits) and these are divided into seven varieties that can carry specialized anti-personnel or anti-armor weapons or that may be trained for close assault. Platoons are divided into three to five squads or teams (represented by stands of two to three figures) and targets are pre-designated (as per vehi-

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cles) by platoon. Before resolving fire the platoon must roll its quality die to check for fire effectiveness. The die roll is compared to the platoon's leadership rating to determine if the fire was ineffective (no casualties), partially effective (draw one-half the normal chits) or fully effective (draw the full number of chits for that type). Each militia and line stand can draw two chits, while each powered

infantry and APSW stand (anti-personnel support weapon) can draw three chits. Only the numbered chits are valid for infantry firefights; valid colors are determined by whether the target is in the open, in soft cover, dug in or in an urban area. A militia stand is destroyed when it takes three damage points, line and APSWs are destroyed by four points, and powered stands are destroyed by five points.

Close assault rules are included, and these are resolved in a manner similar to charge and melee rules in historical tactical games. The assaulting unit must first make a Reaction test roll to determine if it will perform the assault. A successful roll means the unit can move up to the defender, who now makes a Confidence roll to see if it stands firm in place. A failed roll will drop the platoon's confidence and make it withdraw. If both units pass their rolls, then they each pull chits to represent point-blank firing and melee. After casualties are taken, the defender makes a second Confidence roll to see if it stays or not. If it stays, the attacker makes a Confidence roll. If both sides remain steadfast, then additional melee rounds are fought until one or both sides eventually break or are eliminated.

The decision to use these anti-infantry weapons should not be made lightly. If they are fired during an armored unit's activation, it counts as the vehicle's combat action for the turn and it cannot use its direct fire weapon later. The owning player must decide which is the greater threat to his vehicle: a nearby infantry team or a more distant enemy armored unit.

Provisions for infantry-vs.-vehicle combat are also included. Infantry units may be supplied with infantry anti-vehicle rockets (IAVRs) and these can be fired at a vehicle in range instead of firing small arms. In fact, the only situation in which small arms fire can be used against vehicles is when firing upon soft-skinned vehicles such as trucks and jeeps with an armor value of 0. Otherwise, small arms fire is totally ineffective against armored units. Likewise,

those armored units can defend themselves against infantry, first with their direct fire weapons (though some weapons are totally ineffective against infantry while others fire at reduced effectiveness) and second with specially mounted anti-personnel support weapons (APSWs) and anti-personnel fragmentation charges (APFCs). The decision to use these anti-infantry weapons should not be made lightly. If they are fired during an armored unit's activation, it counts as the vehicle's combat action for the turn and it cannot use its direct fire weapon later. The owning player must decide which is the greater threat to his vehicle: a nearby infantry team or a more distant enemy armored unit.

Death from a distance

As if all the above wasn't enough, a set of rather deadly artillery rules helps to round out the combat portion. Players may designate their artillery batteries as either on-table or off-table. The one advantage that off-table batteries have is they can't be engaged by direct fire, but they're

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► MICROARMOR

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still vulnerable to counterbattery fire like on-table batteries. Three types of artillery can be built (light, medium and heavy) and six types of munitions rounds markers can be bought (high-explosion fragmentation, multiple armor killer, dispersed mine, smoke, nuclear and biochem rounds) and stored (three ammo markers per vehicle). Artillery fire can be requested by either forward observers or leaders if they make a successful die roll. Two types of fire missions can be called, harassing fire — which doesn't use ammo markers or cause casualties but still requires the recipient to take a Confidence test — and effective fire, which uses ammo markers and is very likely to cause horrendous casualties. There are two types of beaten zones. The converged sheaf has a 2" radius and requires that each vehicle or infantry stand within the blast radius to have damage chits drawn for it for as many times as the number of weapons in the firing battery. The open sheaf is an elongated ellipsoid that is used when multiple tubes lay down fire over a larger distance. Each target element within the sheaf pattern has chits drawn for it only once per fire mission. One of the main differences between this artillery system and those used for, say, WWII microarmor games is that there is no shell deviation in **DSII**. The rounds fall where they are plotted (obviously artillery spotting and placement has improved considerably by this time period). Damage chits are pulled according to the size of the artillery element and whether the target is soft or hard. The larger the element, the more chits it can draw against its target.

If a player has built a vehicle with a special counter-battery radar, then it may activate to direct CB fire on an already fired enemy battery. A die is rolled according to the vehicle's CBR system quality (basic, enhanced or superior) and success allows a fire mission to be immediately called on the enemy battery. After a battery uses all its ammo markers it can no longer fire effectively (though it can still use harassing fire) and

must be resupplied from other specialist ammo carriers.

Summing it up

In its fifty-six pages, this seems to be a rather complete rules set but I must admit that in the few games I've played several holes and minor questions have arisen. So far these problems have been solved by simply creating a quick house rule on the spot, using common sense based on reference to other aspects of the game and knowledge and experience. For example, if a vehicle were to acquire two "damage" results, what would happen? The rules didn't address this, so we simply decided that two damage results equate to a destroyed vehicle. Another question we had was whether damage points were accumulated from turn to turn. The rules didn't specifically state this, so we quickly agreed that damage points did not accumulate. In another instance an opponent had moved his infantry platoon into some buildings and I wanted to assault his force with my infantry. Though the rules did make provision for fighting around buildings and destroying them, nothing specific was addressed about moving into and fighting inside buildings. We had to quickly devise some simple rules that both of us agreed with.

No, the rules aren't airtight, but the designers didn't try to cover every eventuality. What they were attempting to do (and I believe they succeeded admirably) was create a set of generic rules based on an extrapolation of both present technology as well as predictive and research technology. There are no far-out science fantasy death rays or force fields or orcs and zombies with chainsaw guns here. This is a straightforward treatment of near-future combat in the tradition of **Ogre** and **Helltank**. If you're looking for a generic science fiction microarmor system that will allow you to create virtually limitless scenarios and almost unlimited vehicle design variations, then I would heartily recommend this rules set. Even if this is your first foray into miniatures gaming you'll easily be able to understand its conversational style of rules.



► VINDICATOR, VOL. I

VOLUME I: A LOOK BACK

Editor's note: The following is the second half of a compilation listing articles that appeared in the first volume of VINDICATOR.

No. 5a (October, 1996)

- Editorial — Michael Friend
- The Rogue: A New Hero for **HeroQuest** — Carl Forhan
- **Last Frontier: The Vesuvius Incident** Review — Aaron W. Thorne
- A **Globbo** Campaign System — Aaron W. Thorne
- Metagaming Games Article Index, Part 2 — Michael Friend

No. 5b (November, 1996)

- Marx Gladiators **Melee** Scenario Generation — Kenneth Van Pelt
- The Future-History of SPI: An Attempt at Integration — Mark Wegierski
- Metagaming Games Article Index, a Continuation — Duke Ritenhouse

No. 5c (December, 1996)

- Editorial — Michael Friend
- **WarpWar** Variants: Second Edition — Evan M. Corcoran
- Expanded Combat Results Table for **WarpWar** — Evan M. Corcoran
- **WarpWar** Ship Record Sheets — Evan M. Corcoran
- **WarpWar** in Three Dimensions — Michael Friend

No. 6a (January, 1997)

- Editorial — Michael Friend
- Endurance: A Fourth Character Attribute for **The Fantasy Trip** — Michael Friend
- Simple (Expanded) Economic Rules for **WarpWar** — Shaun Travers
- Corrected Expanded Combat Results Table for **WarpWar** — Evan M. Corcoran
- Simultaneous Movement in **WarpWar** — Evan M. Corcoran
- **Against Four Worlds: A Game in Limbo** — Mark Wegierski

No. 6b (February, 1997)

- Editorial — Michael Friend
- **Gamefix Magazine / Crisis 2000** Review — Mark Wegierski
- Special Pull-Out Game: **Minimal Space Combat** — Timothy Swenson
- More Random Number Generation for PBM Games — Michael Friend

No. 6c (March, 1997)

- **Invasion of the Air-Eaters: Some Thoughts on Strategy** — Tony Watson
- A House Divided: A Closer Look at **Revolt on Antares** — Carl Forhan
- Metagaming Games Article Index: A Continuation of the Continuation — Duke Ritenhouse
- Alien Races in **Universe** — Mark Wegierski



►THE WEB

GAMES OF YESTERDAY, TECHNOLOGY OF TODAY

At first glance, it would appear that the microgame concept and the Internet concept could not be any more opposite of one another. On the one hand, you have small, out-of-print boardgames from 20 years ago; on the other hand, you have the latest in communication and computer technology. What could these two things possibly have in common with one another?

Actually, more than most gamers might realize.

Like almost any other subject one could think of — gardening, crossword puzzles, raising ferrets, which fork to use when at a fancy restaurant — classic SF/fantasy boardgames have found their place on the Web. While none of the sites are as fancy as, say, ESPN's SportsZone (www.espn.com) — at least none of the sites I've stumbled across — they do serve as interesting and useful off-ramps for gamers who surf the fabled information super-highway.

The sites mentioned in the survey on the next two pages are among those I've found that are

"microgame-friendly." By that, I don't mean specifically the Microgame line produced by Metagaming; rather, I'm referring to sites that either contain interesting content from the classic SF/fantasy boardgame era (approximately 1977 to 1984) or sites that are concerned with producing boardgames today that seem to fit in with "spirit" of the aforementioned classic era.

The following listings are by no means to be considered complete — I'm sure there's more than one site I've yet to come across that could have been included. Rather, the listings are intended to serve as examples of sites that might prove to be of interest to the typical reader of VINDICATOR. In other words, bookmark 'em if you like 'em.

Readers are encouraged to e-mail me with other "microgame-friendly" sites that they've come across on the Web. If I receive enough applicable information, there's a chance for a sequel to this article.

— Duke Ritenhouse

Thanks, Steve!

With help from Steve Jackson Games, VINDICATOR officially reached "the big-time" on April 25, 1998.

On that date, the SJG web-site (www.sjgames.com) featured the first Vol. II issue of VINDICATOR in its "Daily Illuminator" news column. Under a heading of "Return of the Vindicator," the short article described the issue, mentioned the subscription rates, and listed my physical and e-mail addresses for interested gamers to contact me. I don't think it's a coincidence

that I had four or five new subscription checks in my mailbox a few days later. Needless to say, there's no way to adequately thank Steve and company for that type of free publicity. Getting the VINDICATOR name in the minds of gamers — and keeping it there — is going to be the key factor in keeping this newsletter alive. And having a major publisher go out of its way to mention VINDICATOR in a public forum is obviously a good way to start.

— DR

►THE WEB

SELECTED MICROGAME

Name	Address	What it's all about
Metagaming Gameography	www.gamecabinet.com/info/Metagaming.html	A list of all known Metagaming releases. Handy for printing out and using as a reference or checklist.
Microgame Co-op	www.ocii.com/~kanderso/coop.html	Publishers of micro-sized games (Arriba Espana , Smokejumpers) and a site for aspiring designers to learn ins and outs of getting published.
Steve Jackson Games	www.sjgames.com	SJG was one of the first publishers to recognize the power of the Web. This is also <i>the</i> site for fans of the Ogre/G.E.V. system.
Microgame HQ	www.ccnnet.com/~johnson/microgame.html	Among other features, offers an index to all known micro-sized games published (searchable alphabetically or by subject).
Fat Messiah Games	www.io.com/~wasson/fmg.html	Publishers of popular SF/fantasy games such as Shapeshifters and Last Frontier: The Vesuvius Incident

►THE WEB

E-FRIENDLY WEB SITES

Name	Address	What it's all about
Fractal Dimensions	www.fractal.mandarin.org/	Publishers of small games such as Breeders: The Assault and a quarterly magazine.
Web Grogards	www.grogard.com/	The most complete and well-known wargames site on the Web. Contains some support for the Microgames and other classic SF/fantasy releases.
Strategy Gaming Society	www.islandnet.com/~citizenx/sgshome.html	The electronic arm of the SGS, which is the oldest continuously existing wargaming club in the U.S. Has useful links to other sites.
RH's WarpWar Page	home.sprynet.com/sprynet/rhogen/rhwww.htm	A site dedicated to what may very well have been Metagaming's best-loved release. Includes complete rules, which can be downloaded.
Vindicator	www.millcomm.com/~forhan/vindicator.html	Reader Carl Forhan maintains the official site of the newsletter you're currently holding. There's an introduction, subscription details, and other features.

► GAME

MINIMAL MECH COMBAT

By Timothy Swenson

*Editor's note: Timothy Swenson was the designer of **Minimal Space Combat**, which appeared in the Feb., 1997 issue of the original VINDICATOR. He has authored a number of "Minimal" games, all of which can be found on, and downloaded from, his web-site.*

Minimal Mech Combat is presented here as an introduction to the series, especially for those gamers without access to any Vol. 1 issues from VINDICATOR. It has been (slightly) edited for length and clarity.

Introduction

Saturday morning cartoons, comic books, and transforming toys — big, powerful robots have been a staple of all three for years. Minimal Mech Combat is a simple game that attempts to create the feel of combat between these mechanical warriors.

Robots

Robots are comprised of the following attributes:

Attack: The ability of a robot to hit another with a ranged weapon.

Armor: The amount of damage a robot can take before being destroyed.

Hit: The ability of a robot to hit another in Close Combat.

Block: The ability of a robot to block a hit by another in Close Combat.

Move: How many hexes a robot can move in a turn.

Weapons: Any weapons that a robot has

Other: Any other abilities.

Robot Turn Record: Before a game, players should create a Robot Turn Record to track their robots' attributes. Attributes can change during the game due to damage; this should be noted on the Record. Weapons and special abilities such as **Jump** should also be noted on the Robot Turn Record.

Robot design

Each robot is designed using a number of Build Points (BPs) to spend on attributes. Each unit of **Attack**, **Armor**, **Hit**, **Block**, and **Move** costs 1 BP. No attribute may be greater than 5. Weapons and their BP costs are listed on the Weapons Chart.

Jump: Jump allows a robot to jump over objects; it costs 2 BPs.

Average robots are 18 Build Points. Other robots can range up to 24.

Turn sequence

Turns are comprised of the following phases:

- Initiative Roll
- Player 1 Movement
- Player 1 Combat
- Player 2 Movement
- Player 2 Combat

Before each turn, both players roll a die. The player with the highest roll becomes Player 1. Ties are re-rolled.

Setup

Map: Minimal Mech Combat does not come with a hex map. It is up to the players to create the

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► GAME

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map. The map can be of almost any size. Terrain is placed on the map at locations agreeable to both players. See the Terrain Chart.

Counters: Counters can be created by using different colored sheets of cardboard. Miniatures or small toys can also be used.

Victory conditions: The players create the victory conditions for the game. They can be as simple as "destroy the enemy" or as detailed as "Do not allow enemy robots to exit our side of map." Players also decide the initial placement of the robots.

Movement

Move is the number of Movement Points that a robot has per turn. The number of Movement Points used in moving into a hex is determined by the terrain in the hex (See the Terrain Chart). Some terrain can block movement.

Robots may not pass through a hex with an enemy robot. Robots may end their turn in a hex with an enemy robot to engage in Close Combat.

Jump: Robots that have the Jump option may perform a Jump maneuver once every three turns. Jumping allows a robot to "jump" over 1 hex and into the next hex, in a straight line. Jumping costs three Movement Points. If a robot has a **Move** of less than three, then it is considered too damaged to Jump. The terrain in the landing hex is ignored, except for any terrain that blocks movement. Jumps can be over other robots, walls, etc.

Combat

There are two types of combat: Ranged and Close. Ranged combat uses weapons fired from a distance. Close combat takes place when two robots are in the same hex.

Ranged combat: Ranged combat may only be performed with ranged weapons. Each robot may only fire one weapon per turn. Ranged com-

Minimal mayhem

The games of the "Minimal" series:

- Minimal Mech Combat
- Minimal Melee Combat
- Minimal Space Combat
- Minimal Space Combat: The Strategic Game
- Minimal Tank Combat

The full text for all "Minimal" games can be found on Timothy Swenson's web-site:
www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Pines/5865/

bat takes place when two things happen: When the defender is within range of the attackers' weapon and there is a clear Line of Sight (LOS) between the attacker and defender. A clear LOS is defined as a line drawn between the attacker and defender that does not pass through a hex with another robot or blocking terrain.

Attacks are made by the attacker rolling 1 die. If the roll is less than or equal to **Attack**, then it is successful. The attacker rolls another die and compares this with the Ranged Combat Damage Table to see where the damage has occurred. If the weapon does more than 1 hit of damage, a roll is made for each additional hit of damage.

Close combat: Robots in the same hex may engage in Close combat. The player in the current Combat Phase is the attacker. Attacks are made by rolling one die. If the result is less than or equal to the attacking robot's **Hit**, then contact has been made.

The defending robot has a chance to block. The defender rolls one die. If the roll is less than or equal to the defending robot's **Block**, then the attack has been blocked. If the block was not successful, the attacker rolls one die on the Close Combat Damage Table to see where damage took place. The defending robot takes one hit of

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▶ GAME

Continued from previous page

damage at this location.

Damage: Damage is applied to attributes by marking off an oval on the Robot Turn Record. If damage is to a weapon, it is the defending player's choice as to which weapon is destroyed. A robot is considered destroyed when all **Armor** ovals are filled in.



Ranged Combat Damage Table

1-3.....	Armor
4.....	Move
5.....	Attack
6.....	Weapon

Close Combat Damage Table

1-3.....	Armor
4.....	Hit
5.....	Block
6.....	Weapon

Weapon Chart

	Cost	Range	Damage
Laser	1	6	1
Grenade**	2	3	1
Missile	3	5	2

** — Can fire over walls and objects. No clear LOS needed.

Terrain Chart

	Movement	Combat
Clear	1	No effect
Trees	2	Blocks LOS into, but not out of, hex
Stream	2	No effect
Wall	Blocked	Blocks LOS
Rubble	2	-1 to Hit or Block

► VARIANT I

THE INTERCEPTION PROBLEM IN FREEDOM IN THE GALAXY

By Tony Watson

The problem

I'm guessing that last year's re-release of the *Star Wars* movies in their special edition formats has gotten some science fiction gamers to reach back into the recesses of their closets for *Freedom in the Galaxy*. Sure, it isn't *Star Wars* exactly, but it's about as close as SPI could come in 1979. The game isn't perfect, but it is very good and it has long been one of my favorites. However, there is one problem in the game mechanics that is so glaring that I'm really quite surprised that it got past play-testing (which makes me both wonder how well play-tested the game was and appreciate how good a game it is *despite* that possible defect).

Veteran players of the Province game scenarios and the full Galactic game may very well have encountered the problem I am referring to. Often, in an orbit box or two across the map, stacks of Rebel and Imperial units will get locked in an ongoing battle that can go on for a number of turns. When I say "locked" I do mean just that. Indecisive combat outcomes and inability of a fleet to break off without the opposition's permission leads to this stagnation. There's something just not right about this — it isn't the flash and motion one expects from a game about space opera.

The culprits are two. First off, the combat rules in *FITG* are not particularly decisive with regards to fighting between roughly equal forces. The combat results are in terms of strength points lost

rather than in, say, percentage of forces, so larger stacks can last longer. The manner in which losses are taken means that high-quality units are difficult to eliminate at low odds. Still, the combat rules are the same for both space combat and surface combat in environs, and in the latter case they work just fine. Moreover, maybe it's not necessarily bad that fleets balanced in strength don't blast each other out of space. Toying with the combat rules doesn't seem to me to be the appropriate solution to the problem.

Which brings us to the second cause of stalemate in the orbit boxes: the interception rules.

For those who are following along at home, the rule in question is: "[20.4] **Interception of Military Units:** During the Interplanetary Military Segment, the non-Phasing Player may intercept any military unit that the Phasing Player is moving out or into an Orbit box by placing any number of his military units currently in the box on top of the units that are being moved; those units may be moved no further."

So, essentially, once opposing fleets are in the same orbit box, no units on either side can leave without the opposition's approval. This is not always quick in coming, since it's usually in one side's interest to keep the other pinned in place. A slightly stronger fleet can trap an inferior one in order to press an advantage; a weaker inferior fleet can tie up a stronger one for a while due to the relatively indecisive nature of combat and prevent it from moving somewhere where it could do more good. These interception stacks often tend to grow as one or both sides move in more units to try to break the stalemate.

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► VARIANTS I

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Now, blockades in space don't make much sense, but they are a staple of science fiction and science fiction games, and they do add something to gaming situations. Nevertheless, the image of space fleets grappling each other for long periods (remember, each turn is two weeks long in the Galactic Game) doesn't really fit with the image of space opera and decisive battles between fleets of spaceships. Even more to the point, I don't think it helps the game at all.

I'm hesitant to make changes in game rules. I figure that the designer(s) had a vision in mind, knew what they were about, and the game publisher did adequate play-testing (OK — call me naive, but I like to give people the benefit of the doubt). However, over the course of years of playing **FITG**, it's become pretty clear to me that this is a real problem with the game and during that time I've looked for a way to fix it.

A solution

How best to fix this problem?

In his response to a review of **FITG** which highlighted the interception/orbit box problem as one of the game's few flaws, the game's principle designer, John Butterfield, wrote: "I agree with your comments on the ability of a player to trap the other's forces on a planet. I saw that it might be a problem during play-testing, although no one took particular advantage of it. Perhaps some sort of screening force rules might have helped, but I think the game has enough rules, so I'll let it stand." (Hmm. See comments in the first paragraph about play-testing. ...)

This comment led me to try playing with some sort of screening rule. I tried it by unit (i.e. the intercepting force could only prevent an equal or smaller number of units from moving). I tried it by space combat factors (the interceptor could only hold on to an equal or smaller number of enemy factors). Both added an extra step to the interception process and worked to a small

degree, but they really didn't solve the problem. Maybe a few units were able to break free, but there were still those knots of forces locked in combat for turn after turn. This approach wasn't the solution.

Butterfield was probably right; the game doesn't need any more rules. I instead dropped the idea of coming up with a new one and looked to subtly changing the existing ones. That's how I hit upon the house rule we use currently.

Simply put, modify the above quoted rule to read: "During the Interplanetary Military Segment, the non-Phasing Player may intercept any military unit that the Phasing Player is moving *into* an Orbit box by placing any number of his military units currently in the box on top of the units that are being moved; those units may be moved no further." (The phrase "out of or" is stricken from the original and "into" emphasized.)

The *spirit* of the rule change is that military units can only be intercepted when *entering* an orbit box, either from an environ on that planet, another orbit box or from hyperspace; they cannot be intercepted when moving out of the orbit box. The *effect* of the new rule is that blockades and interceptions are still there, but they are less effective. Fleets cannot move with impunity past enemy fleets, but they are not forced to become locked in battle over many turns. An intercepting force can stop an enemy fleet from moving off or onto a planet but for just one turn, still getting their chance to attack the enemy but unable to tie them up for long. The military game is now more open, more mobile. It's possible now for Rebel forces cornered on a planet to fight their way past a besieging Imperial fleet, and Imperial forces needed to move to quell rebellion somewhere can't be pinned in place by Rebel ships. Not only do I think it improves the game slightly, this change just "feels" right — more in keeping with the star-spanning battles the game is portraying.



► VARIANT II

EXPANDED OGRE/G.E.V. COMBAT

Or, Don't Hate Me Just Because I Like 20-siders

By Duke Ritenhouse

Vindicator editor and publisher

I've always thought that one measure of a game's appeal — especially a small game's — was if its players tinkered with the rules, or developed variant scenarios, or otherwise somehow altered the basic structure of the game.

And one game I've always tinkered with has been the **Ogre/G.E.V.** system.

This is not to say that the **Ogre/G.E.V.** system contains flaws that need fixing. In fact, I think the opposite is true — it's a system that's elegant in its simplicity, but one which "plays" like a much larger game. It's not fixing flaws that beings about articles such as this one — it's the desire to experiment with an already-sound game system. It's the chance to add a little flavor without being constrained by the original microgame format.

It's with this spirit that creatures such as the Expanded Ogre/G.E.V. Combat Results Table are hatched. Some of us just can't resist messing around with something that already works.

A few observations:

- Using a 20-sided die for a microgame isn't quite as heretical as it sounds. I've never been convinced that the vast number of boardgames — again, especially small games — that use traditional dice are necessarily better off by relying on a d6 system. There's some merit to introducing polyhedral dice into the SF/fantasy boardgame environment. For instance, one number on a 20-sided die is easily understood to be the same thing as "5 percent" on a 100-percent scale.

Twenty years ago, in the era when **Ogre** and

G.E.V. were introduced, it probably would have been a poor decision to package those games with a 20-sided die. Such dice were much rarer than they are today, and one suspects that most boardgamers would have branded them as too "D&D-ish."

But we're less than two years removed from the 21st century — 20-sided dice are not only no longer exotic, they're cheap and they're readily available. It's no longer necessary to play fantasy role-playing games to come into contact with them. And it's high time that they were included in the microgame environment.

- This expanded CRT uses six different types of disabled results, including the standard "flip the counter over" from the original **Ogre/G.E.V.** The five newcomers are explained in full on the CRT itself.

Players should note that the down-side to using different types of disabled results is the inevitable increase in bookkeeping. It is suggested that units be rotated a certain number of hex-sides, depending on the exact type of disabled result. For instance, a unit could be rotated one hexside to the right for a D-1 result, two hexsides for a D-2, etc.

A second note: The new types of disabled results affect armor units only. Ogres still ignore anything but an X result, and infantry are still reduced by one strength point if they suffer any sort of D result — whether it's D, or D-2 or D-5 or what-have-you.

- Overall, this CRT is slightly less deadly than the original. Percentage-wise, there will be fewer X results but more D results if this CRT is used.

Chart on next page

► VARIANT II

Expanded Ogre/G.E.V. Combat Results Table

Odds d20 roll	1-2	1-1	2-1	3-1	4-1
1	NE	NE	NE	NE	D
2	NE	NE	NE	D- 1	D
3	NE	NE	NE	D- 2	D- 3
4	NE	NE	D- 1	D	D- 4
5	NE	NE	D- 2	D	D- 5
6	NE	NE	D	D- 3	X
7	NE	D- 1	D	D- 4	X
8	NE	D- 2	D	D- 5	X
9	NE	D	D- 3	X	X
10	NE	D	D- 4	X	X
11	NE	D	D- 5	X	X
12	NE	D- 3	X	X	X
13	NE	D- 4	X	X	X
14	D- 1	D- 5	X	X	X
15	D- 2	X	X	X	X
16	D	X	X	X	X
17	D	X	X	X	X
18	X	X	X	X	X
19	X	X	X	X	X
20	X	X	X	X	X

NE, D and X results are treated exactly as stated in the standard Ogre/G.E.V. CRT.

D-1: Minor damage. Unit may not fire until it recovers; it may move normally.

D-2: Minor damage. Unit may not move until it recovers; it may fire normally.

D-3: Significant damage. Unit is considered disabled for two full enemy turns, rather than just one.

D-4: Long-term damage. Unit is disabled as per standard Ogre/G.E.V. D result. However, in every remaining friendly Recovery Phase (including the first Recovery Phase in which the unit would normally fully recover), the owning player must roll to determine if unit again becomes disabled. Unit is disabled on a result of 1 or 2 on a d6 roll. Unit's counter should be marked in some fashion.

D-5: Major damage. Unit is disabled as per standard Ogre/G.E.V. D result. Upon recovery, all four of unit's attributes (attack, defense, movement, range) are halved (rounding up) for duration of game. Unit's counter should be marked in some fashion.



► METAGAMING ARTICLES

AN INDEX OF METAGAMING ARTICLES IN CLASSIC-ERA GAMING MAGAZINES

Wow, how about that one for a lengthy headline?

But don't fear — despite the ponderous title, this is really quite a simple article. Some time ago, loyal VINDICATOR reader Jeff Breidenstein submitted a letter to former publisher Michael Friend that included a list of Metagaming-related articles he found in what I presume to be his (meaning Jeff, not Michael) own magazine collection. The letter was inspired by a project that Michael and I ended up collaborating on — namely, a survey of *every* Metagaming-related article to *ever* appear in the pages of INTERPLAY and THE SPACE GAMER (both the Metagaming-owned version and the Steve Jackson-owned version).

Now, rather than just re-run Jeff's letter, I've decided to cut to the chase and extract just the specific Metagaming-related information he came up with.

Additionally, Jeff's research has inspired me to set a lofty goal: I want VINDICATOR to be the ultimate reference source for *all* Metagaming material to ever appear in the gaming magazines of the

A call for research

VINDICATOR is already the only known resource for a comprehensive survey of all Metagaming-related material to ever appear in INTERPLAY and THE SPACE GAMER. And, in the accompanying article, reader Jeff Breidenstein has found quite a few examples of articles from other magazines.

Together, though, we can take this sort of research to the next level. I'm asking all VINDICATOR readers to check their gaming magazine collections for any and all articles that were associated with Metagaming games. Between us, I feel we can come up with *every* relevant article ever to be published in any periodical that had a wider circulation than the average amateur fanzine. Please e-mail or write me if you come up with anything. All of my address information is on the cover.

Thanks in advance.

— DR

era (roughly 1975 or 1976 to 1983 or 1984). Please see the accompanying sidebar for details.

Now, on to Jeff's list — the start of what I hope is something much bigger.

Dragon

Issue No. 10: **Stellar Conquest** — "The Tactics of Diplomacy."

No. 11: **Ogre** — "How Do You Stop That Thing?"

No. 15: **Stellar Conquest** — "Examining Movement Tactics."

No. 17: **Ogre** — "Ogre Piece by Piece."

No. 17: **Monsters!** — review.

No. 17: **WarPWar** — review.

No. 21: **Olympica** — review.

No. 26: **Ice War** — review.

No. 30: **Black Hole** — review.

No. 31: **Stellar Conquest** — "Spicing Up Stellar Conquest."

No. 32: **Wizard** — "Some Spells for the Very Smart Sorcerer."

No. 33: **Invasion of the Air-Eaters** — review.

No. 35: **Wizard** — review.

No. 36: **Stellar Conquest** — "Stellar Con-

► METAGAMING ARTICLES

Continued from previous page

quest for Two."

No. 40: **Annihilator** — review.

No. 41: **Melee** (four articles) — "Melee Combat Statistics," "Experience Points in Melee," "Dragons in Melee," and "Firearms in Melee."

No. 45: **Grailquest** — review.

No. 51: **Chitin:I** — "A New Unit for Chitin:I."

No. 53: **Stalin's Tanks** — review.

No. 60: **Trojan War** — review.

No. 61: **Hitler's War** — review.

No. 64: **Ogre/G.E.V.** (second edition) — review. Note: *The Ogre Book* also reviewed.

Judges Guild publications

Dungeoneer No. 11: **The Fantasy Trip** — "The Lost Lair."

Pegasus No. 6: **Melee/Wizard** — "Caves of the Goblin Lord."

Pegasus No. 10: **Melee, Wizard, The Fantasy Trip** and the first seven Microquests — reviews.

Pegasus No. 11: **Melee/Wizard** — "Crypt of the Living Dead."

Pegasus No. 12: **The Fantasy Trip** — "Physiker Revival for TFT."

The General

No. 21-5: **Hitler's War** (four articles) — "A Westerner's View," "The Case for the Allies," "Hitler's War Design Analysis," and "Hitler's Alternatives."

No. 22-5: **Stellar Conquest** — How to Crack a Planetary Force Field."

No. 23-1: **Hitler's War** (two articles) — "Hitler in Monte Carlo," and "Question Box."

No. 23-3: **Hitler's War** — "Stalin's War."

No. 23-4: **Stellar Conquest** — "Fate of Empire."

No. 24-3: **4** (two articles) — "Rethinking the Conquest of Europe," and "Blitz and Kriegs."

No. 26-1: **Stellar Conquest** — "Stellar Empire: Empire Building in Stellar Conquest."

Adventure Gaming

No. 2: **Ramspeed** — "Optional Variant Rules."

No. 5: **The Fantasy Trip** — "Coming of Age on Cidri."

No. 5: **The Fantasy Trip** — review.

No. 8: **Trojan War** — "Designer's Notes."

Wargaming

No. 2: **Stellar Conquest** — "Frontier Colonies in Stellar Conquest."

Different Worlds

No. 15: **The Fantasy Trip** — "A Modest Proposal for TFT."

No. 16: **The Fantasy Trip** — "Mythological Monsters for TFT."

No. 17: **The Fantasy Trip** — "The Horseclans Player."

No. 28: **The Fantasy Trip** — "Winged Humanoids."

Nexus

No. 2: **Helltank** — review.

Mecha Press

Nos. 12 and 13: **Ogre/G.E.V.** — rules for using Mecha and "Ogre Walkers" in the Ogre/G.E.V. setting.

V.I.P. of Gaming

No. 2: **Godsfire** — review.



Back issues

I have received a number of requests for information concerning the back issues available for Vol. I of VINDICATOR. Please note that I do not have any available — former publisher Michael Friend is the person to contact for all Vol. I information. He can be reached at P.O. Box 384, Manlius, NY 13104. Back issues of Vol. II (of which there's technically just one) are available from me for \$2.50 per copy.

► SUBMISSIONS

VINDIE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

What I'm looking for

Articles relating to Metagaming's Microgames, other classic SF/fantasy boardgames of the '70s and '80s, and contemporary games that seem to fit in with the "spirit" of the classic boardgames era.

Specifically, I'd like to publish:

- New scenarios.
- Variants and rule changes or extensions.
- Strategy tips.
- Unit analysis and statistics.
- Reviews of contemporary games or interest.
- Opinion pieces/editorials (although I am going to try to write one of these myself for every issue, so I might not have room for too many more).

- Letters.

The above suggestions are by no means exclusive — I'll publish anything that appears interesting enough.

What I'm not looking for

- Poetry. It will not run here. Ever.
- Artwork. At least for the first few issues that I produce, I am going to keep my costs down by not hiring a professional printer or typesetter. What you're reading now was produced entirely on my home computer — the minute I start accepting art, I'm looking at halftoning and other printing headaches. So, for now at least, no art.

Exception: Very, very simple charts or countersheets or the like that would look acceptable through either photocopying or by having me redraw them are acceptable.

- Fiction. Unless it's very short and you're very good. Minimum requirement: you've appeared in a publication I've heard of.

• Articles on games such as **Battletech**, **Warhammer**, most role-playing games — with the exception of **The Fantasy Trip** — and

Squad Leader. All of these types of games already have larger, more elaborate magazines devoted to them.

- It should go without saying that I won't publish anything of a slanderous, libelous, racist or sexist nature.

How to send submissions

VINDICATOR is entirely produced on my home Macintosh. Therefore, articles submitted on a Mac-formatted floppy disk or Zip disk are desirable (I won't return floppies, but I will return Zips). For those of the PC ilk, I can convert articles submitted on a PC-compatible disk. Please save your work in ASCII format, however.

If you're sending a disk, please be sure to include hard copy as well.

Better still by far is to simply e-mail an article to me. I've contributed to various newsletters and online magazines over the years, and sending information via e-mail has yet to fail. Again, hard copy should also be forwarded via snail-mail.

I WILL NOT re-type any articles over 300 words (and 300 probably wouldn't be much of an article, anyway). I just don't have the time or the patience.

All of my address information is on the cover.

Payment

Right now, none — except getting your name in print. Upon publication, an article's author will have his VINDICATOR subscription extended by one issue (possibly two issues for an extremely long and/or professional effort).

Copyright

I make no claim to the rights of any articles submitted. Authors will retain their copyrights in perpetuity, as far as I'm concerned.



►THE LAST WORD

Continued from front page

would certainly object.

I included those articles in the "Next issue" box mostly as a hedge against the possibility of not receiving any adequate submissions. However, I already have enough submissions or submission inquiries on hand to ensure that I never have to again write for this newsletter (is that cheering really necessary?).

• Also, as many of you have undoubtedly noticed, this issue is not the "at least" 28 pages promised. For that I can offer a very specific rationale. My neighborhood postal authorities recently informed me of a very interesting fact — if I publish in the same digest-sized format, with the same number of pages, and use the same cute brown mini-envelopes, then my domestic shipping rate is exactly 55 cents (64 cents to Canada). Since I have an abundant supply of both 55-cent stamps and mini-envelopes, the decision to retain last issue's format at least one more time was a no-brainer.

• Speaking of VINDICATOR's format, it probably will change in the near future. While I'm fond of the digest-sized look, it does tend to limit the amount of space available per page, thus forcing many articles to be broken up over several pages. In this issue, I've made more of an effort to have articles run on continuous pages (i.e., 5, 6, 7 and 8) rather than run on any page available.

• Since I've received quite a few inquiries on the subject, here's the specifics on the tools used to produce VINDICATOR: I use a Macintosh Performa 6400/180, with 48K of RAM, and an Apple StyleWriter printer. Editing is done on either Word 6.0 or SimpleText; the design work is done with Quark Xpress. The final versions of the pages are photocopied on the nicest equipment I can gain access to (although not even nice equipment is apparently enough to keep the gray shades I'm so fond of from

Next issue

- **Stalin's Tanks** variant (for sure)
- Using G.E.V.'s in **Battlesuit** (probably)
- Some form of rambling editorial (more than likely)
- Comprehensive Metagaming article index (maybe)
- A **Heroquest** variant (possibly)
- Mounting **Car Wars**-style weaponry on your family automobile (definitely not).
- Combining **WarpWar** with **Sticks & Stones** (just kidding).
- 17 pages of **One World** variants (more humor).

appearing muddy).

For those into graphic design, the body type is Times, box type is Helvetica, and headlines and subheads are Helvetica Compressed. The VINDICATOR logo and the various page-toppers are in a typeface I recently stumbled onto called Gravicon. The bylines and the jump-lines are in Microgamma, which has the distinction of looking very much like Metagaming's old typeface (take a look at any byline — you'll see what I mean).

• For those wishing to submit via PC-formatted disks, I can officially say that I can work with such creatures. There's a few translation problems, but anything is better than re-typing someone else's work. Please save your work in ASCII form, though.

• Finally, it should be noted that this issue of VINDICATOR is not free. If you're reading this, then you're either a subscriber, you're receiving issues to balance out your account from Michael Friend's publishing days, or you're on the much-envied "permanent" subscription list. The April issue was mailed for free to anyone who asked; beginning in early May, however, I adopted a "pay-for-play" requirement.

